

**BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

|                                       |   |                            |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| In the Matter of the Public Reprimand | ) |                            |
|                                       | ) |                            |
| of the Educators Certificate of       | ) | <b>ORDER OF SUSPENSION</b> |
|                                       | ) |                            |
| Melodie R. Smith                      | ) |                            |
|                                       | ) |                            |
| Teaching Certificate # 206313         | ) |                            |

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 12, 2003. On July 1, 2003, the State Department of Education (Department) sent a notice of hearing to Ms. Smith by certified mail, restricted delivery, and return receipt requested. Ms. Smith received this notice as evidenced by the signed receipt. She did not request a hearing and is now in default. The Department proposed to resolve this matter in the following manner: (1) a one year suspension will be issued by the Board, (2) this suspension will be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all school districts in South Carolina, on the grounds of unprofessional conduct and dishonesty, and (3) the order will be maintained as a public record in the Office of General Counsel of the Department. After considering the evidence presented by the Department, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Smith's certificate for one year from the date of this Order.

Ms. Smith is a teacher with over two years of experience credit. For the 2002-2003 school year she had a contract to teach with Richland County School District Two (District) as a special education teacher at Lake Carolina Elementary School. It was later determined that she falsified her employment application with the District. During the year her principal was concerned about Ms. Smith's performance and ultimately recommended that her contract not be renewed for the 2003-2004 school year. When the issue of poor performance and non-renewal came before the District administration, a full review of Ms. Smith's employment application was undertaken. Ms. Smith indicated on the application that she had no prior teaching experience in South Carolina. Upon further investigation, the District found out this information was false. Ms. Smith actually taught in Richland District One and Lexington District Two before applying to teach in Richland Two.

Ms. Smith also indicated on the application that her Special Education (Generic) certificate expired June 30, 2006, when the actual expiration date was June 30, 2003, since she had not passed the appropriate Praxis examination. In a letter dated March 31, 2003, Ms. Smith resigned effective April 11, 2003

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

"The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-150 (1990). "Just cause includes "Dishonesty...and Unprofessional Conduct.," S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-160 (1990); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58. The Board finds that the preponderance of the evidence presented by the Department supports its conclusion that just cause does exist to suspend Ms. Smith's teaching certificate for one year from August 12, 2003 through August 11, 2004. Accordingly, the Board hereby issues this Order of Suspension as set forth above.

South Carolina State Board of Education

/S/ Greg Killian  
Greg Killian  
Chair

Columbia, South Carolina  
August 12, 2003